

TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES COMMITTEE:
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION HB1139 - SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AND
DIVERSION AND ON-FARM COMPOSTING AND COMPOST USE

POSITION: FAVORABLE MARCH 6, 2023

KEITH T. OHLINGER, OWNER, FARMER - PORCH VIEW FARM LLC,
KOHLINGER05@VERIZON.NET

2790 Florence Road,
Woodbine, MD, 21797-7841
(240) 893-1718

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, as a lifelong farmer and owner of Porch View Farm LLC, a 22 acre farm in Western Howard County that raises diverse, heritage breeds of cattle, sheep, pigs, geese, rabbits, and honey bees. I am also a leader and advocate for better farming methods in Maryland. Porch View Farms LLC works with the land and animals without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Being able to compost on the farm is a key element to the success of these methods, for example, composting animal waste to use as fertilizer.

While regenerative agriculture is an important way to support healthy soils and conserve the natural environment, it can be a costly undertaking. This bill would enable farmers like me to access grant funding for composting and compost application. Encouraging more of this work in Maryland is key to building Maryland's healthy soils and maintaining Maryland's food system.

This bill has added strengths of including language making it easier for farmers to apply for this funding, listing a wide range of projects that are eligible for funding, and giving priority to on-farm composting and compost use projects that engage small or diverse farming operations. This language will help to ensure that Maryland farmers are supported widely and equitably. Maryland also has a regulatory roadmap for on-farm compost sites but no dedicated funding to help farmers. If passed, this unique and ground-breaking bill would make Maryland a leader in supporting farmers in this field.

I strongly support HB1139 to establish crucial funding to support Maryland farmers in building healthy soils and healthy farm operations. Please move HB1139 forward for our farmers, local economies, and environment.

Keith T. Ohlinger Owner and Farmer
Porch View Farms LLC